News release

New climate prediction experiment

12 September 2003

The Met Office's world renowned climate prediction model will soon be used by internet surfers around the world as part of new international climate experiment, climateprediction.net. Launched today (Sept 12) at the London Science Museum and the BA Festival of Science in Salford, is an innovative project which aims to allow computer users anywhere in the world to participate in climate prediction work.

Climateprediction.net is a collaboration between the Met Office, the Universities of Oxford and Reading, the Open University, the CCLRC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Tessella Support Services plc. It works by allowing each user to download their own unique copy of a specially tailored version of the Met Office's global climate model and run it on their own PC. The user can see the signal of climate change unfolding in their model and, when the experiment is completed, the information will be fed back to the team for analysis.

Mat Collins, Met Office climate scientist, has been working on the project for almost four years: "This experiment will give us the most comprehensive assessment of future climate change. At the Met Office's Hadley Centre we can only perform a small number of projections of climate change at any one time. climateprediction.net will allow us to run many more of these experiments and give better estimates of uncertainties in climate change to policy makers.

"Those taking part will be contributing to the biggest climate science project ever. We already have more than a thousand people world-wide who have signed up. The more participants we get, the more successful the experiment will be."

Climateprediction.net was the brainchild of Dr Myles Allen at the University of Oxford. He said: "Thanks to chaos theory we can't predict which versions of the model will be any good without running these simulations and there are far too many for us to run them ourselves. Together, participants results will give us an overall picture of how much human influence has contributed to recent climate change and of the range of changes in the future."

More about the Met Office

More about the Met Office's Hadley Centre

More about climateprediction.net

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